



*Friday, July 26, 2013*

*Featured by [DOE](#), a member of the U.S. Global Change Research Program*

In his speech at Georgetown University last month, [President Obama referred to our nation's vulnerabilities to climate change](#), underscoring how Hurricane Sandy and other climate-related disasters serve as wake-up calls.

These extreme weather events as well as changes in temperature and water availability – all related to our changing climate – are disrupting the ways we generate, distribute, and consume energy, according to a new report released by the US Department of Energy.

The [U.S. Energy Sector Vulnerabilities to Climate Change and Extreme Weather](#) report examines current and potential future impacts of these climate trends on the U.S. energy sector.

In particular, researchers have identified several critical issues, including power-plant disruptions due to drought and the disruption of fuel supplies during severe storms. The report also pinpoints potential opportunities that would make our energy infrastructure more resilient to these risks.

Here are some significant details from the report:

- Climate change has created an increased risk of shutdowns at coal, natural gas and nuclear power plants. Why? Changes in the climate mean decreased water availability -- which affects cooling at thermoelectric power plants, a requirement for operation.
- There are also higher risks to energy infrastructure located along the coasts thanks to sea level rise, the increasing intensity of storms, and higher storm surge and flooding.
- Power lines, transformers and electricity distribution systems face increasing risks of physical damage from the hurricanes, storms and wildfires that are growing more frequent and intense.
- Air conditioning costs will rise due to increasing temperatures and heat waves, along with the risks of blackouts and brownouts in regions throughout the country.

To view the [Department of Energy](#) blog post on the U.S. Energy Sector Vulnerabilities to Climate Change and Extreme Weather report, please [click here.](#)

To download a PDF of the report, please [click here.](#)